

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of two lit blue candles. The candle in the foreground is in sharp focus, showing its bright blue flame and the texture of the wax. The second candle is in the background, slightly out of focus, creating a sense of depth. The overall lighting is warm and golden, typical of candlelight.

# *Engaged in Mission* magazine

## **GOD'S LOVE IN ACTION**

| GOD AT WORK THROUGH MISSIONARIES & MISSIONS IN 2020 |

WINTER 2020



Stories about cultivating leaders intentionally engaged in loving the Lord, people, and our Lutheran theology to make disciples of all nations in the Minnesota South District and beyond.

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### COVER IMAGE

Advent candles and crucifix on Dec. 10, 2019, at Holy Cross Lutheran Church.

Photo by Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

## IN THIS ISSUE

### 1 Forward in faith

As many of us are fighting against misbeliefs and temptations, let us pray all the more fervently for deliverance.

### 2 Your mission gifts at work

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### 3 Rural, immigrant community outreach

At a dual-parish in Austin and Brownsdale, **Rev. Gemechu Olana** helps forge new community bonds, to grow relationships and share the Good News of Jesus.

### 4 The joy of giving

As District Correctional Ministry Coordinator, **DCE Dr. Jim Seemann** works with people from all walks of life, and encourages you to do the same.

### 5 A new kind of summer camp

The summer of 2020 brought unprecedented programming changes for **Camp Omega**.

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POBLO missionaries **Nader and Georgette Alaraj** help congregations welcome immigrants and others.

### 8 No leader walks alone

Training, one-on-one coaching, and other resources from **LINC Twin Cities** ensure no local leader walks alone.

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### 12 New ways to bless others

In Northeast Minneapolis, **Vicar Martin Cornes** helps the Gloria Dei congregation show love to their community through surprise blessings.

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# THE BEGINNING . . . AND THE END

by Lucas Woodford

The year 2020 was certainly full of chaotic beginnings, tragic endings, and uncertainty for the future. Yet there was and always will be a divine solace for every uncertainty and a holy soothing for every heartache. Such comfort comes from the One who was there in the beginning (see Genesis 1:1) and goes with you through every beginning and every ending of your life.

The year 2020 is no different.

Despite the advent of a global pandemic, increased civil unrest over social injustice, and a contested national election, the work of the Holy Christian Church has carried on. Missionaries shared the Gospel, pastors and congregations cared for souls, Lutheran schools taught children in the way they should go. Even better, the promises of our almighty Triune God remained true and present.

*“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”*

(REVELATIONS 22:13)

The very One who created “the beginning” reigns over us as our Lord and God. But not just any god—He is the God of all time and space. He is the God of all creation. He is the only being with no beginning and no end.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth and all that was in them. Life was begun. God called it “good” (Genesis 1). But then Adam and Eve sinned. The ground was cursed, temperatures plummeted, mosquitoes grew nasty, disasters abounded, and life now ended in death. Humans brought an end to God’s good beginning.

The year 2020 has been a clear reminder of that.

To restore this fallen beginning, God Himself willingly entered into His creation. He became a man with an infant beginning. Jesus Christ, the

Word who was with God in the beginning, the Word who created the beginning, came and made His dwelling among us (John 1:1-14).

However, His earthly beginning came to a pain-filled, agonizing end upon the cross of Calvary. The punishment for the sin begun in the Garden of Eden, and carried on by you and me to this day, was ended by His death upon the cross. And then the life given in the beginning was restored when the resurrected Jesus broke free of the tomb!

This is the promise and the hope that we carry with us, that leads us forward in our mission and ministry. Through all of our beginnings and endings, we have a Lord who is with us. When our life begins, He is here in the waters of Holy Baptism, bringing His Word of love and grace. When life’s races are run, school years and new begun, and new families are made, He is with us.

Even more, when life’s races grow difficult, when relationships end, families fall apart, and careers come to a close, God is still with us, promising never to leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). Greatest of all, when our earthly life ends in death, He is there to bring us to the beginning of eternal life. In the beginning and in the end, Jesus is there. He is the Alpha and the Omega.

This is the message that our District missions and missionaries have preached in 2020. Amidst confusion, despair, and frustration, each and every one of them has ministered with this absolute and abundant hope-filled confidence.

I pray this up-close look at their stories from 2020 encourages you to find hope in the beginning and end of 2020—and everything in between. Your prayers, financial gifts, and cooperative partnerships allow our missions and missionaries to reach new people groups, minister to hurting communities, and teach the Gospel of Christ crucified, beginning to end.



Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford is president of the MN South District. View his latest blog posts and what he’s reading at [mnsdistrict.org/presidents-office](https://mnsdistrict.org/presidents-office). Email him at [lucas.woodford@mnsdistrict.org](mailto:lucas.woodford@mnsdistrict.org).

# YOUR MISSION GIFTS AT WORK

We invite you to use this list in your personal and corporate prayers, that these leaders would be strengthened in their efforts to reach people with the good news of Jesus.

## 2020 District-supported missions & missionaries

### MN South / CALMS Exploratory Trips to Central America

*Rev. Dr. William Utech*

### District Correctional Ministry

*DCE Dr. James Seemann*

### Holy Cross & Our Savior Lutheran Churches (Austin & Brownsdale) & East Austin Immigrant Outreach

*Pastor Gemechu Olana*

### LINC Twin Cities

*Pastor Ben Griffin & Pastor Demelash Yoseph*

### New Creation Lutheran Church (Shakopee)

*Pastor Craig McCourt & Vicar Jorge Gomez*

### POBLO (People of the Book Lutheran Outreach)

*Nader & Georgette Alaraj, Bloomington  
John & Mariam Gayed, Rochester*

- ReDO / Shepherd of the Valley (Hastings)
- *Pastor Chad Kirchoff*
- St. Matthew's & Gloria Dei Lutheran Churches (Columbia Heights & Minneapolis) & NE
- Minneapolis Outreach
- *Vicar Martin Cornes*
- Sudanese Evangelical Lutheran Mission of Southern Minnesota (Faribault)
- *Pastor Gatluk Reat*
- UpWorks Christian Community Development (Minneapolis)
- *Lisa Peterson*
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## MN South District LCMS career and GEO missionaries



**Rev. Dr. Thomas & Mary Aadland**  
*Theological educator, Kenya*



**Rev. Vance & Linda Becker**  
*Theological educators, Kenya*



**Johanna Heidorn**  
*Photographer / communication outreach specialist, Latin America & Caribbean*



**Rev. Dr. Daniel & Dr. Joan Jastram**  
*Asia theological education manager, Asia*



SUPPORTED MISSIONARY:

# REV. GEMECHU OLANA

**Rev. Gemechu Olana** was installed as dual-parish minister of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Austin and Our Savior Lutheran Church in Brownsdale on October 21, 2018. The existing congregations' goals are strengthening and revitalizing the existing congregations while reaching out to the growing multi-ethnic, multi-cultural immigrant population in Austin through purposeful community outreach.

**One of the** ways we try to reach out to our community at Holy Cross is by hosting family and child-oriented events—Easter egg hunts, St. Nicholas Day celebrations, and community connections through visitation. We want to bless our community, show them that our church cares for them and wants to be part of their lives, and build strong relationships. At the same time, we are very intentional in being evangelistic in all our outreach efforts. For example, at each event, our mission team uses different Bible activities to engage the children and gives each one an Arch Book that pertains to the event.

We had a lot of momentum and hope until COVID-19 broke out and hampered our in-person outreach efforts. Still, our event-oriented outreach helped us welcome an Ethiopian family, whose child I baptized on March 8, 2020, at Holy Cross. The mother has an Ethiopian Orthodox background, but still decided to join Holy Cross with her family. I am currently catechizing her, and I hope to confirm her before the end of the year. Together with five adults from other states, we meet each Sunday by Zoom for an hour of catechism. They have three young children.

Although COVID-19 has put a limit on what we can do in terms of face-to-face outreach, we have continued to explore all types of outreach as best we can. For example, on October 31, we hosted, “All Nations Virtual Hallelujah Feast” for children in our community and connections. With the great help of my wife, Yeroon, we coordinated the virtual event on Zoom from our home, with the involvement of Pastor James [from St. Johns Lutheran Church, Austin] and his wife, Kerri. The event involved praise,



Welcoming Ethiopians during child's baptism on March 8.



Celebrating St. Nicholas Day in 2019.



Hosting the “All Nations Virtual Hallelujah Feast,” October 31.

*(continued on page 13)*



SUPPORTED MISSIONARY:

## DCE DR. JIM SEEMANN

**Dr. Jim Seemann** has served as the Minnesota South District's correctional ministry coordinator since 2014. During the pandemic, as prison visitations have been restricted, he has served largely out of The New Freedom Store, which has blossomed and evolved during the pandemic to serve not just those recently released from prison but also the growing homeless population and neighbors in need.

**The joy of** giving is not just the gift. It is an emotional exchange, too.

The most recent study of the homeless in Minnesota was conducted 2018, estimating that 19,600 Minnesotans experienced homelessness on any given night, with 50,600 homeless over the course of the year. There are no estimates available for 2020, but we may conclude that this pandemic has only increased those numbers, especially in the Twin Cities, where homeless encampments have sprung up almost wherever space permits.



Hamline Park homeless encampment just across the street from Jehovah Lutheran Church, St. Paul.

The New Freedom Store, a District mission endeavor, has responded in kind, thanks to individual donations and gifts from the Lutheran Women's Mission League. The LWML women of Good Shepherd Lutheran in Circle Pines donated over 90 quilts for those recently released from prison. Lutheran school children have done their share, too. The fifth and sixth graders of King of Kings Lutheran School in Roseville made tie blankets for the homeless. Students of Eastern Heights

Lutheran Church in St. Paul put together over 100 hygiene kits. When this first cold snap came early, they pitched in a second time, assembling another 100 winter kits. The winter kits include a stocking cap and a pair of gloves along with a few extras like a granola bar.



Students at Eastern Heights assembling winter kits.

Most of these will go out directly to the homeless and the recently released, but a number have been retained for churches and congregants who may know others in need. You are welcome to pick up as many as you like. Simply email me at [seemann@csp.edu](mailto:seemann@csp.edu). Keep the kits around at your church in case the homeless call, or keep one in your car next time you see someone in need.

Conventional wisdom tells us not to be too concerned about those begging along the I-94 corridor. Most of them are concerned about money, not gifts. But there is a certain small bit of wisdom attached to giving and receiving gifts. Gifts are a way of caring and sharing. The emotion is joyous. And we all know that emotions are contagious, too. **A gift is not just a gift but an emotion, a little bit of joy shared among us.**



SUPPORTED MISSION:

# CAMP OMEGA

ENCOUNTERING CREATION ... CREATING COMMUNITY  
... COMMUNING WITH CHRIST

**I sat on** a Zoom call, looking at the faces of the college kids I had interviewed for a summer staff position in 2020. Each of them had been chosen to serve, love, and care for the campers whom God would call to Camp Omega. During their interviews, their excitement had buzzed in the air. Their eagerness to see smiles on campers while running across the green grass or to hear voices raised in song around the campfire poured out of every conversation I had with them.

But this Zoom call was not good news. Due to COVID-19, Camp Omega had to cancel all regularly scheduled youth programs. It seemed unreal as I shared the news. They had held on hope to be able to share the unending love of Christ with campers. This Zoom call was somber, with tears and silence. **It felt like summer had died.**

God had different plans. His plan was to use Camp Omega in a way that our staff never thought possible. Camp was able to hire a few summer staff for a summer of Family Camp programming.

Makenna, one of the summer staff, asked, “How can we serve in the capacity we have now?” She and the summer team worked hard to create:

1. A safe, impactful family summer camp program
2. An entire online summer camp for families
3. A virtual summer day camp for congregations

She reflected afterward, “We got to do more because we got to reach more people: parents, grandparents, people we don’t spend time with” in a normal summer season.

This team created a summer program that “helped families have the experience they wanted.” Families chose the activities they wanted to do, had Bible studies with the camp staff or on their own, and joined in socially distanced worship at the evening campfires.

Elizabeth, a parent who participated in some of Camp Omega’s fall programming, reflected her joy “to see how happy [her kids] were to sing praises to God.” It almost brought her to tears. Lisa, a parent whose family stayed in the TreeHouse Village this summer, remarked upon the value of “connecting my family and extended family with Christ, in nature.” **God’s plan was not for summer 2020 to die but to resurrect it in a new way.** It was a chance for Camp Omega to try doing summer differently than ever before, and it made an impact in a new way with our guests.

But the change in our summer still came with financial hardship. Still, we believe that God has got this. Camp Omega supporters have heard our cry for help. We firmly believe that God provides for his people and missions. Camp is only able to serve campers and families through the generosity of others. There are lots of ways that you could support Camp Omega through this pandemic:

- Bring your family or a group to Camp
- Share what Camp means to you on social media
- Encourage college-aged students to apply for summer 2021 staff
- Consider a donation in any amount
- (Most importantly!) Pray for outdoor ministry across the country

Camp Omega is looking forward to bringing the lessons and new experiences from summer 2020 to summer 2021. Plans are in place for youth camp but also added opportunities for families. God has provided throughout 2020. His plan was so much bigger. **Jesus continues to resurrect and make all things new both here at camp and throughout the world.**



SUPPORTED MISSIONARIES:

## NADER & GEORGETTE ALARAJ

**Nader and Georgette Alaraj** have served as missionaries in the Twin Cities through POBLO International Ministries for four-and-a-half years. Their focus is on cultivating relationships and bringing immigrants (and often Americans) through the doors of LCMS churches.

### About POBLO's mission

We would like you to know that we are here because of you, your church, and your outreach. We want to see the Church prosper. The model we help churches adopt revolves around creating an international friendship center (IFC) within the church. The IFC serves as a safe and welcoming environment for those in need, be it free classes (in English, citizenship, sewing, and others), personal support, or Bible Study—and ultimately salvation. POBLO missionaries like us serve as liaisons to bridge the cultural and religious gaps in order to minister properly.

The worsening coronavirus pandemic brings challenges, especially with lower attendance inside the three Twin Cities IFCs: Mt. Hope Lutheran Church, Bloomington; Ascension Lutheran Church, Burnsville; and Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Prior Lake. With many unknowns, we trust God for giving us quality time to have straight talk and Bible study with immigrants, especially Muslims.

### God at work in “Andrea”

One particular family, originally Palestinian, was born and raised Muslim, until one day the mother, let's call her “Andrea,” was fed up with the mistreatment of women in the specific region where she lived.

The culture, dominated by Islam, favors men over women. Andrea's strong personality helped pave her way to become a lawyer, and she ran for office during the general elections in her country. The Islamic groups defied her ambitions and

helped her get defeated. One day, the Imam was performing the Muslim call to prayer through the mosque's speakers, which is the norm in predominantly Muslim cities. Her soul refused to hear this call to prayer while, simultaneously, experiencing extreme suppression of basic rights because she is a woman. It was the last push to make her reconsider Islam as a faith and a way of life.

Andrea had always noticed how the minority Palestinian Christians were positively different—they were respectful in their treatment and did not discriminate against women. After she asked a Christian friend of hers about Jesus, she was equipped with Christian resources.

As the Lord softened Andrea's heart and she read the New Testament, He appeared to her in several dreams! He did not identify Himself by



Socially distanced Bible study at the Ascension Lutheran IFC in Burnsville.



name, but every time she saw this gleaming Man in the dream, He would hug her, comfort her, and hold her neck while calling her “sister.”

Andrea was tearful recounting her testimony to us, realizing how intimate and friendly God can be. We shared this passage: “Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters” (Hebrews 2:11 NIV).

Astonishingly, her Muslim mother-in-law (MIL) saw the same dream Andrea had. The MIL, of course, did not recognize the Man as Jesus. She told Andrea that she tried to fight this Man off but He would tell the MIL, “No, she is mine,” referring to Andrea. He confirmed the reality of the dream to Andrea through a non-believer!

Andrea believed, was baptized, and nowadays she is living with her husband and two children in Minnesota. She wants us to help her family members—who do not trust Jesus yet—to do so. We periodically visit with them to strengthen the ties. As you read this, we are studying the Bible three times a week at the Burnsville IFC. Andrea’s daughter is thirsty to know God’s love and how Jesus wants her to be with Him.

## Welcome to the family

As discerned, it is extraordinarily vital for missionaries to be around, fishing for souls. Our family would have never imagined meeting with this family and others, ironically a blessing outcome of COVID-19. Other immigrants also tell us, “You are our only family here.”

### **This ministry is yours.**

Please share POBLO Twin Cities with your pastors, clergy, family, church staff, and members. Invite us to share with you how God uses POBLO in many lives. I also teach about Islam and simple-valiant outreach via seminars, and can help you start your own IFC to reach many in your neighborhood, with no obligation.

In exchange, we certainly need your prayers, and for volunteers to be involved. Your financial support encourages us and more importantly makes us available (when you cannot be) in the



lives of believers and nonbelievers alike, which leads to experiencing the love of Christ and for the salvation of souls. Please consider us with mission funds or have individual donors support our outreach **on your behalf**. Kindly, contact me at [nader@poblo.org](mailto:nader@poblo.org), 402-968-6486, or through the MN South District office.

For more frequent updates, connect with us on Facebook by requesting to be added to the Facebook group (as it is private) called “International Friendship Centers Twin Cities.”

 **Facebook: International Friendship Centers Twin Cities**



SUPPORTED MISSION:

# LINC TWIN CITIES

NO LEADER WALKS ALONE

## About LINC Twin Cities

LINC Twin Cities works to raise up local leaders so that our cities will know Jesus. We ensure that “No Leader Walks Alone” by coming alongside each of them to make their God-given ministry vision come to life. These are leaders who are often overlooked and under-resourced. Right now, LINC is providing connections, high-quality resources, training, coaching, and strategic ministry plans to over 100 ministry leaders with diverse ethnic backgrounds in the Twin Cities. These leaders are being equipped and empowered to reach people for God’s Kingdom in their own communities.



Local leader Alfrieda Baldwin.

## Alfrieda’s story

One of LINC’s ministry leaders, retiree Alfrieda Baldwin, sees the education gap in the Twin Cities

and the need for quality, affordable, Christian neighborhood schools. God has been leading her to be part of the change from a young age.

Growing up, Alfrieda found herself moving from the public school system to a private Lutheran school, where God would begin to plant seeds of faith and a love for solid, Christ-centered education. Having thought she would one day become a teacher, God led her on a path to become a lawyer instead, where she would gain valuable skills and knowledge. That would lay a foundation for a different calling that wouldn’t come until years later.

When she was 55 years old, her passion for working with children was reignited when she volunteered in a first-grade classroom. After looking into several different options to get back to her love of education, she decided to make the most of her retirement and become a volunteer tutor.

As she worked within the public school system, she saw the need to offer a different kind of education opportunity to parents and students in the Twin Cities: an attainable, affordable Christ-centered micro-school that reflected the many “Tribes, Tongues, and Nations” that make up the demographics of the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area.

The solution? Laurel Community School.

This unique take on education will seek to serve both Christian families looking for biblical teaching to supplement an exceptional curriculum and non-Christian parents looking for high-quality education in a safe and loving environment. This micro-school will feature a single teacher offering instruction to a small, multi-age classroom. The school will combine a classical education

approach with hands-on learning.

Alfrieda has an even broader vision to continue planting these Christian micro-schools throughout the Twin Cities so that more and more families have access to intentional, Christ-centered education, and as many children as possible can have the opportunity to grow to be Christ's disciples.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has given the kind of small-group education that Alfrieda hopes to provide an even broader pathway to success. Parents have already begun creating their own "Pandemic Pods," where they work together to educate their children in a smaller, safer environment. Alfrieda sees this shift as an opportunity for Laurel Community School to provide exactly the setting these parents are looking for in an affordable, accessible way.

She hopes to partner with local churches that have unused space during the week to house her school and find a dedicated, Christ-following teacher to deliver the school's unique educational approach so that she can launch in the fall of 2021. Currently, she is in discussions with a Lutheran church in the Como Park neighborhood of St. Paul about housing her first school.

LINC Twin Cities City Director Ben Griffin says,

Alfrieda is an inspiration to all of us. We love her heart for the next generation, her deep faith for Jesus, and her vision for Laurel community school. We have so enjoyed working with her to make valuable connections and see this God-given dream come to life.

LINC has been able to provide resources for Alfrieda such as the "Guide to Starting a High



Ben Griffin leads an online strategy session during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Impact Ministry" to help her create a Strategic Plan to open her school, and she has benefitted from LINC's direct one-on-one coaching.

## Your contribution matters

You can join LINC in making sure that No Leader Walks Alone by continuing to **pray for God to connect us with under-resourced or overlooked ministry leaders throughout the Twin Cities.** Want to get even more involved? You can become a coach through our coach training program or partner with us financially so that we can continue to provide high-quality resources and training.

Find out more about how to partner with LINC at [www.linc.org/twincities](http://www.linc.org/twincities).



SUPPORTED MISSIONARY:

# REV. DEMELASH YOSEPH

MISSIONARY-AT-LARGE WITH LINC

**I am happy** to share with you, our mission partners who are supporting God's mission in many ways. I am Demelash Yoseph, serving in Minnesota South District to reach out mainly to Oromo people here in Twin Cities and beyond. God has blessed us in many ways even during this pandemic time.

One of the stories is that we had a baptism of three children on November 15, 2020. Jesus said in John 5:17, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working" (NIV).

**I encourage people in mission to continue supporting God's mission in prayer, giving, and words of encouragement.**



Above and below, Rev. Yoseph baptizes children at a November Oromo worship service at Emmaus Lutheran Church, St. Paul.

*"We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."*

(ROMANS 6:4)





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SUPPORTED MISSIONARY:

# VICAR MARTIN CORNES

**Vicar Martin Cornes** has served at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Northeast Minneapolis since January 2020. He spends half his time as vicar and the other half as outreach / missionary. He works alongside Pastor Bill Hugo and St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Columbia Heights.

## About our mission

Northeast Minneapolis, also known as “Nordeast,” was originally an Eastern European, working-class area with many Catholic immigrants. Recently the area has been thriving as younger and more diverse people move into the area and drive up housing prices. On the contrary, Gloria Dei has seen a reduction in congregation size. So our aim is to bring revitalization and, God willing, some growth to the church, as well as outreach to the local area and cooperative ministry with the ethnic minority groups who live a little further away.

The mission of the church when I arrived was to be a “Caring, Sharing, Serving and Reaching” church. We are beginning to unpack that to mean:

- **Caring** for people in the church.
- **Sharing** what we have with each other, so people see the love we have for one another.
- **Serving** the local community.
- **Reaching** out—locally and globally—to those who don’t know Christ with the Good News of the Gospel.

## New community outreach in 2020

Despite COVID-19 happening early on in my ministry here, the congregation at Gloria Dei has been blessed to make an impact on our local community through working with the Salvation Army. We also delivered Mother’s Day roses to the senior living facilities and local residents. [The roses story was shared in the summer issue of *Engaged in Mission*.]



A staff member at a local senior living facility joyfully receives Thanksgiving cards and candy.

Offering safe worship for the congregation and community has also been a top priority. Our outdoor services, when the weather was a little warmer, attracted positive attention from passers-by. Notably, a high percentage of our congregation consists of shut-ins—some for quite a few years and without access to a computer. So we found a way to download our worship services onto iPads and distribute them to our shut-ins. We were blessed by a contribution from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund and a Bible study group who made this possible.

## Thanksgiving cards and candy

More recently, for Thanksgiving, we distributed boxes of cards and candy to encourage the staff at the nine senior living facilities in our area where we have congregation members. Gifts were also delivered to other shut-in members. The senior living staff (pictured) were so grateful for being thought of at this time, as we give thanks to God amidst the pandemic struggles.

Additionally, we dropped individual cards and candy at the local fire station and at about 200 homes around our neighborhood, as a blessing to them this Thanksgiving. As we did so, some people watched out of curiosity, giving us a chance to greet those we met along the way.

Our DCE intern, Devan Arntson, produced the wording on the cards:

Almost 400 years ago, the first Thanksgiving was celebrated. In a winter of extreme starvation, an unexpected blessing led to a three-day feast where the settlers and natives shared an abundance of food. More importantly, they “gave thanks” to God for taking care of them when the world seemed hopeless. Today, we still have all the reason to give thanks. The world may look different, but God still provides each and every day.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving from your friends at the church on the corner, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, NE Minneapolis.



A staff member at a local senior living facility joyfully receives Thanksgiving cards and candy.

Of course, we hope and pray that through these cards and gifts, people will want to come visit us and find out more. But we did this because we want to bless people, and ultimately, the Lord will do His work, through the Holy Spirit, in the situations and lives of those who received them.

**Let's continue praying that people are drawn back to give thanks to God at this time.**

SUPPORTED MISSIONARY:

**REV. GEMECHU OLANA**

*(continued from page 3)*

a devotional, and Bible-themed costume contests. Surprisingly, 75-plus families (about 250 kids) participated—a few from Austin and the rest from across the States and even Canada. We don't know where this will lead, but we don't want to ignore this opportunity. We'll see if we can pull a few kids for confirmation from this pool. We are planning a similar event for December 3, 2020, St. Nicholas Day.

For those who want to support the mission initiative, I would suggest two ways:

1. **Prayer.** Especially under the current pandemic context that limits what we can do in terms of face-to-face outreach.
2. **Financial assistance** to the District mission fund, which allows us to do this ministry.

We very much appreciate all the support we've received through your prayers and financial support of the District mission grants!



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